

from what he had experienced at Quatre Bras, could not be justified.¹

"No situation could be more trying to the steady courage of the British army than the disposition of the troops in square at Waterloo. There is an excited feeling in an attacking body that stimulates the coldest and blunts the thought of danger. The tumultuous enthusiasm of the assault spreads from man to man, and duller spirits catch a gallant frenzy from the brave around them. But the enduring and devoted courage which pervaded the British squares, when, hour after hour, mowed down by a murderous artillery, and wearied by furious and frequent onsets of lancers and cuirassiers, when the constant order, 'Close up! close up!' marked the quick succession of slaughter that thinned their ranks, and when later in the day the remnants of two and even three regiments were necessary to complete the square which one of them had formed in the morning — to support this with firmness, and 'feed death' inactive and unmoved, exhibited that calm and desperate bravery which elicited the admiration of Napoleon himself.

"Knowing that to repel these desperate and sustained attacks a tremendous sacrifice of human life must occur; Napoleon, in defiance of their acknowledged bravery, calculated on wearing the British into defeat. But when he saw his columns driven back in confusion, when charged on the left of the English line by the gallant Ponsonby, when his cavalry receded from the squares they could not penetrate, when battalions were reduced to companies by the fire of his cannon, and still that 'feeble few' showed a perfect front, and

¹ After one of these charges of cavalry a hand-to-hand encounter, many of which occurred during the day, took place in sight of the British forces. An hussar and a French cuirassier met in the plain; the former had lost his cap, and was bleeding from a wound on the head; he did not, however, hesitate to attack his steel-clad adversary, and it was soon evident that the efficiency of cavalry depends upon good horsemanship and skill in the use of the sword, and not on heavy defensive armor. The moment that the swords crossed the military skill and superiority of the hussar were evident; after a few skirmishes the Frenchman received a violent cut in the face that made him reel in his saddle: it was now impossible for him to escape his active opponent, and a well-directed thrust of the British hussar levelled the cuirassier to the ground, amidst the cheers of his anxious comrades.— Editor of 1836 edition.